

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6723

As Passed House:

March 1, 2006

Title: An act relating to the retirement allowance of a member who is killed in the course of employment.

Brief Description: Determining the retirement allowance of a member who is killed in the course of employment.

Sponsors: By Senators Eide, Delvin, Keiser, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen; by request of LEOFF Plan 2 Retirement Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Appropriations: 2/16/06, 2/20/06 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/1/06, 95-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Reimburses the cost of Health Care Authority insurance premiums for surviving spouses and dependents of members of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System Plan 2 (LEOFF 2) killed in the course of employment.
- Extends the availability of Health Care Authority insurance to survivors of emergency service personnel and all LEOFF 2 members killed in the line of duty prior to January 1, 1998.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 30 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Buri, Chandler, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, P. Sullivan, Talcott and Walsh.

Staff: David Pringle (786-7310).

Background:

Retired or disabled employees of the state, school districts, and participating political subdivisions may purchase health care benefits from the Public Employees' Benefits Board (PEBB), administered by the Health Care Authority (HCA). This coverage is purchased at full cost based on the risk pool that the participants belong to, and includes administrative costs for each participant. Participants eligible for Medicare are placed in one risk pool, and all other retired or disabled participants are placed in a risk pool along with active employees. Groups are charged based on their per capita costs incurred by the risk pool they belong to, minus an explicit subsidy in the case of Medicare-eligible participants.

The 2001 Legislature enacted Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1371, which enabled surviving spouses of emergency service personnel killed in the line of duty on or after January 1, 1998, to purchase health care benefits from the PEBB. "Emergency service personnel" for this purpose includes fire fighter and law enforcement members of the Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Retirement System and the Volunteer Fire Fighters' and Reserve Officers' Relief and Pension System. The cost of the insurance is paid by the surviving spouses and dependent children.

Summary of Bill:

The retirement allowance paid to survivors of all LEOFF 2 members killed in the course of employment includes reimbursement for the cost of participating in a PEBB health insurance plan. The survivors of members killed in the line of duty prior to January 1, 1998, as well as on or after January 1, 1998, are eligible to participate in the PEBB health insurance plans.

There is no contractual right to reimbursement for the health care insurance costs, and the Legislature reserves the right to amend or repeal this act for future reimbursements.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Thank you for the support that you have shown this bill by passing out the companion measure earlier this session.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Renee Maher; Kelly Fox, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters; and Steve Nelson, Law Enforcement Officers' and Fire Fighters' Plan 2 Retirement Board.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.